

The Effect of Communist Party Policies on the Outcome of the Spanish Civil War

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I. INTRODUCTION

The scars left by the Spanish Civil War and the ensuing 36 years of Franquist rule are still tangible in the culture of Spain today. In fact, almost 70 years after the conclusion of the conflict, the Civil War remains the most defining event in modern Spanish history. Within the confines of the three-year conflict, however, the internal “civil war” that raged amongst the various leftist groups played a very important role in the ultimate outcome of the war. The Spanish Civil War was not simply a battle between fascism and democracy or fascism and communism as it was often advertised to be. Soldiers and militiamen on both sides fought to defend many different ideologies. Those who fought for the Republican Army believed in anarchism, socialism, democracy, communism, and many other philosophies.

The Soviet Union and the Spanish Communist Party were very involved in both the political situation prior to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and in the war itself. This report will analyze the Communists’ role in the evolution of the Second Spanish Republic and in the outcome of the war. Section II will examine the political and social situations of Spain and Europe prior to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Such an examination will identify circumstances in Spain that created tensions between the government, the upper-class, and the working class and study the ever-increasing tensions that threatened Europe as a whole. An analysis of the history of Marxism and communism within Spain itself (Section III) will help to frame the involvement of the Communists in the Spanish Republic and the policies they pursued to either avoid or propel the start of the war. Section IV will discuss the intervention of foreign powers in the Spanish Civil War and the conditions that resulted in the outbreak of war. Finally, the

actions and policies of the Communists during the war will be analyzed in Section V to determine the effect they produced on the outcome of the war. This analysis will ascertain whether the Communist Party aided the Spanish Republic or in fact helped destroy it.

II. EUROPE AND SPAIN PRIOR TO THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

During the approximately thirty years between the end of the First World War and the start of the Second, Europe as a whole experienced many changes. These changes influenced developments within Spain prior to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and also influenced how the European nations responded to the Spanish conflict.

Other than World War I, the first major change that occurred in Europe was the Russian Revolution of 1917. During the Russian Revolution, worker uprisings overthrew the monarchist regime of Czar Nicholas II and replaced it with a Communist government based on Marxist principles that had been somewhat modified by Vladimir Lenin, the first leader of a Communist Russia. As a result of the destruction caused by World War I, many other European countries found themselves to be in social and economic conditions that paralleled those in Russia prior to the Russian Revolution. These social conditions permitted the rapid spread of communism throughout Europe, with Communist parties appearing in nearly all of the major European powers. The propagation of communism became a question of great concern for the European democracies, specifically France and Great Britain, who viewed communism as a threat to their traditional ways of government.

In 1922, a Fascist regime took hold in Italy when Benito Mussolini assumed the role of dictator. Mussolini had been appointed Prime Minister by the Italian king Victor Emmanuel III, who saw the need for either a Fascist or Socialist government to avoid a Communist takeover within the country. It was through this appointment that Mussolini was able to obtain total political control over Italy.

The Great Depression also had a drastic effect on the situation within Europe. The Depression decimated the economies of Europe, which were still in a rebuilding phase from the First World War. One of the results of the economic crises that affected Europe was the appearance of a totalitarian government in Germany. The dissolution of the Weimar Republic's Grand Coalition as a result of strong opposition in the wake of the Depression allowed Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazi Party, to establish a foothold in the German government. By August of 1934, Hitler had managed to consolidate control over both the military and the Nazi party, cementing him as the supreme ruler of Germany. Hitler modeled his regime after Mussolini's, which valued totalitarianism, extreme nationalism, and militarism while opposing liberalism, especially Marxism and communism (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2007).

Essentially, European nations were facing a struggle between various forms of progressivism such as socialism, democracy, and communism, and conservative backlashes of fascism, resulting in two World Wars. These conflicts would ultimately envelop Spain, too, forcing a war between conservatism and liberalism; however, the plight of Spain begins much earlier.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Spain as a whole suffered from a great deal of social and economic underdevelopment. The country had experienced little

industrialization and consequently the Spanish populace did not boast a middle-class such as existed in Britain and France. This lack of development was partly a result of Spain's isolation from the rest of Europe. Though it had some connections to France due to the reign of the Bourbon family, Spain's geographic location and lack of involvement in European affairs kept it relatively isolated. This isolation permitted the persistence of one of the main sources for Spain's lack of development: the country's political situation. The Spanish government essentially consisted of an oligarchy. The monarchy served as the official head of state and was supported by the upper-class members of the Cortes (the Spanish version of Parliament), the military, and the Catholic Church. Together, these groups stood as arbiters of conservative power, allowing the government to deeply entrench itself in the political structure. Without the presence of a large middle-class in the first half of the century to foment a bourgeois revolution such as had occurred in France, the oligarchy faced no true threat to its power. Consequently, the government saw no need for structural change within its administration despite the changes occurring within the country.

During the middle of the nineteenth century, Spain saw a sudden increase in the level of its industrial development. The arrival of the railroad and the development of industry along the northern and eastern coasts of Spain led to the emergence of both the working and middle-classes. The middle-class, inspired by the democratic ideas of the Enlightenment and the bourgeois revolutions of France and the United States, recognized that the oligarchy stood as an obstacle to the development of Spain. For the first time, truly liberal groups had emerged in Spain. The social and economic progress that was beginning to surge within the country was constricted by the archaic conservative values

of the oligarchy. The very nature and structure of the government prohibited it from adapting to Spain's evolution, however. Unrest within the government as indicated by rebellions within the Army demonstrated the government's weakness to the moderates and liberals. It would be only a matter of time until they would act upon that fragility.

In 1868, the middle-class partnered with Army defectors to foster a bourgeois revolution, known as the Glorious Revolution, which led to the fall of Isabel II. As Gerald Brenan explains:

The middle classes had risen because her camarilla governments had taken away their liberties, the generals had risen because she had chosen a lover who was not in the Guards, the people had risen because they had lost their common lands and because they disliked being sent to die in remote unhealthy climates in incomprehensible wars. (2)

Though the middle-class had achieved its goal of deposing the oligarchy, the members of the Cortes could not agree on what sort of government to implement. It was finally decided that a constitutional monarchy should be established in accordance with the 1869 constitution, and in 1870 the Italian prince Amadeo was elected as King Amadeo I of Spain. He swore to abide by the Spanish Constitution but his government lasted only two years before he was forced to abdicate his throne. On February 11, 1873, liberals, republicans, and moderates in the Cortes voted by a majority to declare the First Spanish Republic.

As the founders of the first true liberal government of Spain, the leaders of the Republic were unsure how to proceed. It did not help that the Republic was plagued by many problems, including questions of regional autonomy, sedition in the army, a lack of political legitimacy, and fighting amongst the Republican leadership. The government's inability to resolve its issues resulted in the restoration of the monarchy and the proclamation of Alfonso XII (Isabel II's son) as king in 1874. Though the monarchy had

been restored, the political environment of the nation required it to follow (at least in appearance) a constitution, drafted by Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, a conservative politician who served as the administrator of Alfonso XII's government. Recognizing the need to appease the growing Radical and Republican masses, Cánovas constructed the façade of a constitutional monarchy while reconstructing the oligarchy. In order to maintain the semblance of the constitutional monarchy, Cánovas implemented elections in which property owners were permitted to vote for representatives to the Cortes. For nearly 60 years, however, not a single election would be honest.

Cánovas, as a politician, saw that Spain must be governed for a time by the upper classes, who alone could be counted on to support the new regime. But the country (that is to say those who had the right to vote) was mainly Radical with a strong admixture of Republicans, and under free elections they would have returned a Radical majority to the Cortes. This was the reason why the elections had at first, until the Monarchy should gain strength and prestige, to be controlled. (Brenan, 3-4)

Every election or so, the control of the Cortes would systematically switch hands from Liberals to Conservatives. One of Cánovas's tactics was to resign and let Liberals take over if an economic crisis occurred. Yet by the last quarter of the century, there really was little difference between the so-called "Liberal" and "Conservative" parties "except that Liberals were anti-clerical and interested themselves in education, whilst the Conservatives professed a mild concern for agriculture and for social conditions" (Brenan, 4-5). The false elections continued throughout the rest of the century and government handovers were orchestrated to facilitate the succession of Alfonso XII, who died before the birth of his son, Alfonso XIII. As a rule, the party that formed the elections generally won them, and so the farce continued into the twentieth century.

Despite some development during the middle and latter parts of the nineteenth century, the effects of Spain's lag in modernization and industrialization could be felt well into the 1900's (Bennassar, 16).

Poverty was so great...that over half a million Spaniards, out of a population of eighteen and a half million, emigrated to the New World in the first decade of the century alone. Life expectancy was around thirty-five years, the same as at the time of Ferdinand and Isabella. Illiteracy rates, varying sharply by area, averaged 64 per cent overall. Two thirds of Spain's active population still worked on the land...Industry and mining provided only 18 per cent of the jobs available... (Beevor, 9)

The economic and social conditions of Spain at the start of the twentieth century isolated it from the political situation that was brewing throughout the rest of Europe at the time. While this isolation shielded Spain from the devastation of the impending World War, it also allowed the government and upper classes to continue to ignore the changes that were taking place within the country.

The political situation within Spain continued to destabilize as the twentieth century progressed. Beevor refers to the political atmosphere as a violent cycle between industrial revolt and repression (12). Several civilian uprisings and worker strikes took place during the first few decades of the twentieth century, such as Barcelona's *Semana Trágica* (Tragic Week) in July 1909. The uprising began when supporters of the Republican Radical Party leader Alejandro Lerroux vandalized and burned churches. It ended when the army arrived to restore civil order and the final result was a massacre. The staunchly conservative military held great influence over the government and therefore served to impede social and governmental reforms within the country. To further complicate the situation, the military was greatly overmanned, with some 160,000

men in total (Beevor, 14). The excessively large military was a source of great economic drain on the government. Anti-military sentiment was high throughout the country due to the military's severe and incompetent responses to the various crises that Spain was experiencing.

Due to its relative isolation from other European countries, Spain chose to maintain a policy of neutrality during World War I. Its neutrality allowed it to serve as a source of agricultural products and raw material exports for both the Allied and Axis Forces, and consequently Spain's economy began to boom. It was mainly industrialists that reaped the benefits of the economic growth, however. Industrial workers received a 25 per cent increase in wages, but prices doubled (Beevor, 13). The end of the war brought with it the end of the period of economic prosperity. The pain of the war also led Spain's European neighbors to revert to protectionist governments, pushing Spain back into its pre-war isolation. The glimmer of hope that had been visible during the few years of prosperity created resentment between the social classes that would only serve to create more problems in the years to come.

The general social conditions within Spain continued to deteriorate in the post-World War I period. The infant mortality rate fell and the population grew, leading to an influx of migrants in the cities and a jump in the unemployment rate. The government, nevertheless, was not yet ready or willing to abandon the conservative attitudes that had prevailed since the nineteenth century. Though worker movements inspired by Marxism and Anarchism had recruited large numbers of members throughout the end of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth, it was not until the late 1920's that these movements were powerful enough to have the potential to force substantive change

within the government. The government's inability to keep pace with the evolving social environment only added fuel to the frustrations that already plagued the Spanish populace.

The inspiration of the Russian Revolution led workers to become more militant and strikes became more frequent during the 1920's. Inspired by the success of the proletarian revolution in Russia, Spanish workers began to threaten landowners, telling them that they might face the same end as Russian landowners had at the hands of the revolutionaries (Beevor, 16). The governments began to recognize the need for urgent land reforms, but the rapid turnover of governments prevented any solution to the land problems. Any hope of progress was destroyed in 1921 when the Spanish Army suffered a great defeat at Annual in Morocco that was blamed on Alfonso XIII. The government began an inquiry into the incident, but the military general Miguel Primo de Rivera pronounced himself dictator during a coup d'état in 1923 to avoid public reprimand against the King and the Army. After Primo de Rivera regained civil control within the country, he set forth a program to modernize the country's infrastructure; however, the program was overambitious and the national deficit grew dramatically. Opposition to his dictatorship became rampant. By 1930, Primo de Rivera saw no other option than to present his resignation to the King.

Alfonso XIII called on General Dámaso Berenguer to fill the void left by Primo de Rivera's resignation. The King's choice greatly insulted the head of the Guardia Civil, General Sanjurjo, who would later become instrumental in planning an August 1932 coup that would anticipate the Civil War. As strikes became more rampant, Berenguer began to lose control of the political situation and was replaced on February 14, 1931 by

Admiral Juan Bautista Aznar. Alfonso XIII declared that municipal elections would be held on April 12. Socialist and liberal Republican candidates won the majority of the provincial capitals and Admiral Aznar presented the king with the resignation of his government. On April 14, 1931, Alfonso XIII fled Spain and the Second Republic of Spain was proclaimed by Republican leaders (Beevor, 19-20). The elected leaders formed a provisional government and began to push through a variety of liberal reforms, including (but not limited to) the reduction of the length of obligatory military service and the forced retirement of many officers, the separation of Church and State, and freedom of worship. These changes did nothing but further antagonize the military, the Church, and the conservative elements of the population. The government's repression of worker strikes caused even the syndicates to favor revolution against the Republic.

Elections were held at the end of June 1931 and the government, headed by Manuel Azaña, continued even further with its progressive programs. Azaña had a vision of Spain that was very different from how the country had operated historically. “[Azaña] Tenía una buena formación jurídica [...] y había pasado dos largas temporadas en Francia [...]. Admiraba las instituciones del país vecino y soñaba con transformar España según ese modelo de sociedad laica, gobernada por las leyes de la democracia burguesa” (Bennassar, 42). Over a two year period, conservative groups became increasingly disaffected and organized themselves under José María Gil Robles, the leader of the Spanish Confederation of the Autonomous Right (Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas). During the 1933 elections, CEDA won the most seats in the Cortes and used its power to try to annul and repeal all the progressive reforms put through by Azaña.

The conservative government's policies resulted in a backlash from workers' unions and strikes were declared throughout Spain. The most notable of all the strikes was the Asturian miners' rebellion in October of 1934. 20,000 workers seized all the mining areas and began to overrun police posts to obtain weapons. On October 6, they invaded the Asturian capital of Oviedo where they declared a proletarian revolution. Revolutionary terror overtook the city, and many clergymen were killed by the workers. Columns of the Spanish Army and Air Force took back control of the city a week later. Fighting between the workers and the military continued until the workers surrendered on October 18. During the two weeks of the insurrection, casualties were enormous, with approximately 1,200 deaths (Payne, 55). The government responded quickly, arresting and executing thousands of workers. The conservative government's harsh reaction to the Asturias rebellion greatly weakened its support base as the 1936 elections approached. Consequently, a coalition of the leftist parties, known as the Popular Front, was able to regain a majority in the Cortes. Just as their right-wing predecessors had done, the Popular Front government attempted to annul or repeal any legislation that had been put forth by the previous administration. The tension between conservatives and liberals during this period continued to boil, ultimately exploding into the Spanish Civil War.

III. THE HISTORY OF COMMUNISM IN SPAIN

Though both Marxism and communism had existed in Spain for almost half a century prior to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, they were not overwhelmingly popular movements among the Spanish populace. In 1879, the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Worker Party, PSOE) was established and its union, the Unión

General de Trabajadores (General Union of Workers, UGT) was created in 1888. At the time of the party's founding, however, Spain was still a chiefly agricultural nation, and the UGT only managed to recruit 100,000 members by the time of World War I. In contrast, anarchism grew to be an extremely popular movement among the Spanish, and the anarchist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Labor, CNT) contained over 700,000 members following World War I (Payne, 9). In both syndicates, the most active centers were located in Catalonia and the Basque Country, which were by far the most industrialized and developed regions of Spain. Consequently, they experienced an emergence of a conscious working class earlier than other provinces (Alba, 3).

Prior to 1920, many Spaniards saw similarities between the social and economic situations of Spain and those of pre-revolutionary Russia. As a result, the Russian Revolution found many sympathizers among the Socialists and Anarchists of Spain. In fact, at the second CNT congress of 1919, leaders stated that the goal of the CNT was the formation of a "libertarian communist" regime (Alba, 5). In 1920, the PCE, PSOE, and CNT considered joining the Third Communist International (Comintern), but soon afterwards, the socialists and anarchists rescinded their affiliation with the Comintern after rejecting Lenin's Twenty-one Conditions¹. Nonetheless, during April of 1920, the PSOE's youth movement Federación de Juventud Socialista (Federation of Young Socialists, FJS) voted to break away from its parent organization to found a Communist

¹ Lenin's Twenty-one Conditions were a set of regulations for organizations that desired to affiliate themselves with the Third Communist International. The requirements were made to ensure that the new parties would experience a complete break from the Socialist and Social Democratic parties from which they originated. Some of the regulations included the inclusion of the word "Communist" in the party's official name, periodic purges of their ranks, the maintaining of an official party press, and a policy of constant "warfare" against Social Democratic parties. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2007).

party affiliated with the Comintern. The FJS fused with pro-Soviet dissidents from the PSOE to form the Partido Comunista de España (Communist Party of Spain, PCE). As a result of differing opinions regarding the split from the Comintern, the Spanish Marxist and communist groups found themselves increasingly divided. Comintern officials were sent to Madrid in 1922 to attempt to reunify the various communist groups, but the effort met with great difficulty. It was not long before the extremism of the PCE began to concern the Soviet leadership. The PCE began to turn towards violence with increasing frequency and refused to cooperate with the Comintern's policy of a United Front with the UGT and CNT, earning "a minor notoriety among the Bolshevik leaders for its dissensions and leftist tendencies" (Payne, 15). Consequently, the PCE began to see its influence and power within the Comintern decline.

Some of the most influential members of the CNT, most notably Andreu Nin and Joaquín Maurín, also were attracted by the romanticism of the Russian Revolution when they visited Russia with the first CNT delegations to the Comintern in 1920. Though their personalities were quite different, they "had in common their conception of politics as the education of the populace, their sympathy for the Bolshevik revolution, and an impassioned interest in the Marxism they had just begun to study" (Alba, 7). They both believed that it was important for the CNT to be involved with the Comintern and its labor syndicate arm, the Profintern. After the CNT incorporated itself with the Comintern, Nin remained in the Soviet Union to work as a delegate of the CNT. Despite Nin's position, the purely anarchist elements of the CNT were unsympathetic to the Profintern because of the imprisonment of many Russian anarchists in March 1921. Maurín believed that it was necessary to combine the ideals of Marxism with the ideals of

anarchism and collective violence, but was imprisoned in February 1922. Due to his imprisonment, the anarchists were able to revoke their affiliation with the Profintern and Nin was left in Russia representing no one (Alba, 9). Maurín's position was quashed by the CNT leadership, and he set about organizing new groups that would maintain association with the Comintern and Profintern. Both Maurín and Nin met several times with Leon Trotsky and were extremely impressed and influenced by his revolutionary ideas. Nonetheless, their association with Trotsky would plague them throughout their involvement in the Spanish conflict.

In 1923, General Primo de Rivera assumed control of the government through a military coup. His opposition to communism and the worker's revolution led to the repression of both the PCE and CNT. Though they were not officially outlawed, the parties were tightly regulated and they continued to work in secret to recruit more members and publicize their agendas (Elorza and Bizcarrondo, 43). Despite their common obstacles, the Communist groups became further divided. The PCE split into three new factions and Maurín and Nin's relationship with Trotsky became increasingly suspicious and dangerous in the eyes of the Comintern and its affiliates in Spain. Maurín was expelled by the PCE in June of 1931 for following "a liberal Menshevik line which, in the current situation of Spain, constitutes a true betrayal of the proletariat revolution" (Elorza, 77). After his expulsion from the party, Maurín created the Bloc Obrer i Camperol (Worker-Peasant Bloc, BOC) in Barcelona. Andreu Nin, who had been expelled from the PCE in 1928, created the Izquierda Comunista de España (Communist Left of Spain, ICE) in March 1932, an officially Trotskyist party. Other dissidents in Catalonia formed their own party, the Partit Comunista de Catalunya (Communist Party

of Catalonia, PCC). Though many of these dissident groups had very few members, their inability to agree and cooperate set the stage for the lack of unity that would later plague the Republic during the war. As the Communist groups in Spain continued to fracture, Dmitry Manuilsky, a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International stated that, “in Spain you have an excellent proletariat, such as perhaps we lacked in Russia...but not a communist party. That is the tragedy” (Payne, 20).

Stalin’s consolidation of power within the Soviet Union in 1933 complicated the situation in Spain even further. For several years, Spain was put on the back burner by the Stalinist USSR, who believed it to be one of the lower priorities in Europe. With the lack of direction from the Comintern, the influence and unity of the PCE deteriorated within Spain. It was not until 1930, during the right-wing dictatorship of Dámaso Berenguer that the Soviets decided to get involved again in Spain. They attempted to resurrect the PCE in order to spur a revolutionary movement, but by this time, the PCE was so incredibly fractured that such attempts failed. To make matters worse, the PCE was in disagreement with the Comintern’s policies regarding the Spanish situation. General Sanjurjo’s attempted military coup in 1932 led to the PCE coming to the defense of the Spanish Republic. The Comintern saw these actions as counterrevolutionary; they proclaimed that the Republic was a façade for what would soon become a fascist dictatorship. José Bullejos, who had served as secretary-general of the PCE for nearly eight years, was denounced by the Italo-Argentinian Vittorio Codovilla, the adviser to the PCE’s Madrid leadership, as a counterrevolutionary. Bullejos and two other top PCE officials were forced to resign for their refusal to aid in the overthrow of the Spanish Republic. The replacements for the PCE’s leadership were required to maintain absolute obedience to

the Comintern and high enthusiasm for the fulfillment of Comintern policies. Consequently, the new leadership of the PCE was more or less a group of Comintern puppets. The new leaders included José Díaz, who had served as the PCE's head in Andalucía, Jesús Hernández, one of Spain's first graduates of the Lenin School in Moscow, Vicente Uribe, and Dolores Ibárruri, known most commonly as "La Pasionaria". As Elorza and Bizcarrondo explain, though they were named as the new PCE leadership, these four were not truly in charge.

...no cabe hablar en rigor de historia del Partido Comunista de España, sino de historia de la Sección española de la Internacional Comunista. Las decisiones que luego ejecutaban los distintos órganos del PCE no eran fruto de una discusión colectiva en el Buró Político o en el Comité Central del Partido, ni emanaban del buen sentido revolucionario de José Díaz o Dolores Ibárruri. (444)

Rather, the "head" of the PCE between mid-1932 and mid-1937 was Codovilla, who Elorza and Bizcarrondo describe as "la cabeza visible y actuante...un comunista argentino, maniobrero y astuto" (444). Though native Spaniards were designated as the leaders of the PCE, the decisions and policies implemented by the PCE were often not decided upon by Spaniards concerned only with the best outcome for their country and their people.

A further point of contention amongst the Communists was the Soviet Union's complete ignorance of the situation in Spain. The Comintern considered Spain to still be a semi-feudal country despite the protests of the PCE and other groups that such was not the case. It became the agenda of the dissident Communist parties to create a form of Marxism adapted to the circumstances of Spain. Maurín observed the bourgeois-democratic revolution to be weak within the country. The powerlessness of the bourgeoisie and the divisions amongst the working class population made the idea of a bourgeois-democratic revolution implausible for Spain. Instead, according to Maurín, the

only route for a successful Spanish revolution was the arming of the working class. The armed proletariat would forge a sense of unity and purpose and propel the outbreak of the bourgeois revolution.

The basic FCC-B/BOC² program therefore set forth such revolutionary goals as giving land to all those who worked it, recognizing self-determination for national minorities, arming a worker militia, controlling industrial production by the syndicates, and nationalizing banking, mines, and transport. This program was to be carried out in conjunction with the consolidation of the bourgeois-democratic revolution; and only after that revolution had been completed would it be possible to talk of establishing a worker-peasant republic, which could move on to the socialist revolution. (Payne, 39)

Though Maurín was in disagreement with the PCE about how to bring about the ultimate goal of a workers' revolution, he did agree with their stance which labeled social democrats as the worker revolution's greatest foe.

Provincial autonomy became an increasingly divisive issue amongst all Spanish political groups, both those on the left-wing and those on the right. The PCE sought autonomy for all regions of the Iberian Peninsula, followed by their unification under an Iberian Union of Socialist Republics, much like the model Lenin had established for Russia. The BOC believed that only those regions with "historic nationality", namely Catalonia and the Basque Country, should be granted autonomy. In contrast, the FAI-CNT threatened to take up arms against any attempts to separate Catalonia from the Spanish nation. Maurín had initially believed the CNT to be a key ally for the BOC party; however, the increasing discord over the issue of Catalan autonomy led to altercations between the two groups throughout 1932 and part of 1933 and damaged the cooperative relationship Maurín had envisioned.

² The FCC-B (Federación Comunista Catalano-Balear, or Catalan-Balearic Communist Federation) was formed by the fusion of CSR parties (Comités Sindicalistas Revolucionarios or Revolutionary Syndicalist Committees) in order to allow them to enlist in the PCE. The FCC-B later joined with Maurín's BOC to promote revolutionary activity after his dismissal from the PCE.

In order to encourage membership growth within the PCE, the leadership set out to develop PCE sections within the various provinces of Spain. Additionally, they promised autonomy to Catalonia and the Basque Country and to any other separatist regions in exchange for solidarity with the PCE and the pursuit of a worker-peasant government established by a proletarian revolution. The official Communist line at this time decried social democracy as the true evil, and in Spain the enemy was the PSOE. Though Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany at the end of January 1933 did not yet greatly concern the leadership of the USSR, the result shook the Communist groups in many other countries, including Spain. The PSOE began to encourage cooperation with the PCE and other workers' groups in order to fight the impending danger of fascism in Spain. The fear of fascism in Spain became so overblown that nearly everyone was accusing his enemies and opponents of being fascist. According to the Anarchists, Communists, Republicans, and Socialists were fascist. The Communists, for their part, referred to the Republican government as a fascist regime (Payne, 36). The lack of trust among leftist groups would serve as a major obstacle to the development of a unified party that could stand up to the fascist or nationalist threat that would soon emerge.

After the government of Azaña fell in 1933, a second set of elections for the Republic was held. As a result of the lack of unity amongst all the leftist groups operating in Spain, only the PSOE managed to retain a large representation within the parliament. The right, on the other hand, won a decisive victory. The PCE found itself increasingly isolated from the other leftist groups, but nonetheless the official party line continued to portray the socialists and anarchists as agents of fascism. A headline of *Mundo obrero* on

January 13, 1933 read: “Like ravens and hyenas. The socialist leaders roll around in the worker blood spilled by themselves” (Elorza, 173). In contrast, many of the rank-and-file of the PCE disagreed with the PCE leadership and felt that it was necessary to ally with other leftist groups in order to fight back against the conservatives’ victory in the elections and to ignite the Spanish revolution. Members of the PCE began to question the official party line and some even left the party altogether to answer Maurín’s call for a front against the right and against fascism. In November of 1933, an Alianza Obrera contra el Fascismo (Worker Alliance against Fascism) was formed in Barcelona, consisting of representation from the Catalan arms of the BOC, the PSOE, the UGT, the ICE, and several other groups. The Alianza proclaimed its goal to be the defeat of fascism and the advance of the socialist revolution.

Threatened by the right’s victories in the 1933 elections, the PSOE and moderately left political groups became increasingly radical. Francisco Largo Caballero, the Republic’s Minister of Labor, claimed that the country was in a “full-scale civil war” against the right (Payne, 45). Both moderate and more extremist left-wing groups began attempting to bring down the elected government and called for the cancellation of the election results. Despite the prior differences between the Socialists and the Communists, Largo Caballero announced that “the difference between [the Communists] and us is no more than words” (Payne, 46) and the PSOE leadership began to justify the use of violence for political means. After 1933, Largo Caballero was given the nickname of the “Spanish Lenin”, a name indicative of the increasingly bolshevized Socialist line within the PSOE (Elorza, 80).

Despite the leftward shift in the Socialists' stance, it was not until September 1934 that the PCE ceased referring to the PSOE as social fascists and instead decided to join the Alianza Obrera in Madrid. Late 1934 also marked an overall shift in the Comintern's policies within Europe. Feeling increasingly threatened by Hitler, Stalin began to form diplomatic relations with other European nations in an attempt to reduce Soviet isolation and provide greater security for his country. The new Communist policy called for the formation of a broad coalition against fascism involving Communists, Socialists, and moderate democratic and leftist groups. The goal of the Communist party was still a socialist revolution and the installation of a worker's government, but fascism was the more pressing issue. The Communists knew that a fascist government coming to power would virtually end all hopes of the proletarian dictatorship. As a result, the Popular Front was viewed as a necessary intermediate step in order to protect the possibility of reaching the final goal.

In July of 1935, Joaquín Maurín and Andreu Nin combined their BOC and ICE parties to form the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (Worker Party of Marxist Unification, POUM). Maurín's recipe for the success of the socialist revolution was quite similar to that of the PCE, but his opinion on what exactly constituted fascism drove a wedge between the two communist groups. In fact, as Stanley Payne describes, "Maurín fue la figura más original y creativa de la izquierda revolucionaria en España, y lo más cercano a un teórico original español del marxismo" (qtd. in Zavala, 15). Nonetheless, during 1935, strict adherence to Marxism was not the philosophy being handed down from the Comintern to the Communist parties throughout Europe and the rest of the world. Maurín claimed that fascism was nothing more than the final stage of capitalism

and criticized the idea of the Popular Front, labeling it as a postponement of the socialist revolution. The new party was of instant concern to the PCE, who labeled it as a Trotskyist group due to Maurín and Nin's previous affiliations with Trotsky. Indeed, Nin's ICE contingent had initially been a Trotskyist group, but Nin had begun to separate himself from Trotsky's ideals in 1932. By 1934, Nin had formally broken relations with Trotsky and Trotsky himself had denounced the POUM as a centrist organization for not adhering to his tactic of "entryism" (Nin, qtd. in Zavala, 57).³ The POUM officially rejected Trotskyism, but was nonetheless friendly to him, igniting a great deal of scrutiny from the Stalinist Communist parties.

In the 1936 elections, the Republicans and Communists were largely overrepresented among the leftist groups with the Socialists and the POUM only receiving a few candidacies. The Socialists accepted this format readily, but the POUM did so with reluctance. The POUM was against the entire concept of the Popular Front, but felt forced to cooperate in order to avoid total isolation. Of all leftist groups, the POUM was the only one that ran on a platform of immediate revolution to replace the Popular Front government with a worker government. The Popular Front government won the elections by a slim margin, but the far left saw the results as a go-ahead from the populace to implement their plans of revolution.

Despite the apparent unification of the Spanish left under the umbrella of the Popular Front, it became clear shortly after the 1936 elections that the unity was no more than a farce. The Socialists and Communists had simply latched on to the moderate left

³ Trotsky's idea of entryism required dissident communists to incorporate themselves into the Second Socialist International parties and convert them to revolutionism. Nin did not believe that the ICE (the party he originally founded) had the manpower and influence to undertake such a campaign, and furthermore believed that it could not be successful in Spain at the time (Payne, 99).

Republicans as a way to gain the votes of the middle classes in the elections. As Diego Martínez Barrio, a Republican leader explained:

‘certain Socialists, and all the Communists suffered from the mirage of what had taken place during the Russian revolution of 1917, and handed to us Republicans the sad role of Kerensky. According to them, our mission was reduced to smoothing their road to power, since the phase of the democratic revolution had already ended in the history of Spain.’ (Payne, 85)⁴

In other words, the Republicans had essentially driven themselves into becoming obsolete. By aligning themselves solely with the revolutionary left, they made enemies of the right. Despite being told by the Socialists and Communists that they only desired the alliance as a means to earn an electoral victory, the Republicans chose to stick with the far left and consequently isolated themselves completely.

With the moderate left more or less out of the picture, the Socialists and Communists were free to begin implementation of their plans to achieve a worker’s government. Their agendas were aided by the obviously pro-radical Azaña government, which released revolutionary criminals from prison and threw military and police leaders who were loyal to the Republic into jail (Payne, 86). The government’s goal was not simply to annul the measures put into place by the Gil Robles’s conservative government, but rather to completely reverse those measures. Furthermore, the government did not attempt to stop or control the decline of public order that was often precipitated by left-wing groups. Payne provides a small portion of what occurred, including “arbitrary arrests of rightists and centrists while the left usually enjoyed impunity; falsification of electoral results and processes; widespread confiscation of property, [...]; and a mounting

⁴ Alexander Kerensky was one of the leaders of the February Revolution (1917) in Russia and a prominent leader of the first Soviet governments. He pursued a policy of “no enemies to the left” and completely isolated the conservative groups while greatly empowering the Bolsheviks. However, after the October Revolution of 1917, Lenin overthrew Kerensky’s government and Kerensky was forced to flee into exile. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2007)

spiral of political violence” (86). The revolutionary parties already believed that they had received a mandate from the Spanish people to proceed; the actions of Azaña’s government served essentially as another green light for the Socialists and Communists to continue planning for the revolution of the masses.

The PCE put forth its path for developing the revolution in the February 25 issue of their newspaper, *Mundo obrero*. The plan called for:

- Confiscation of all lands not held by peasants, which the latter may work individually or collectively.
- Cancellation of all peasant debt, increase in wages, and reduction of the workday.
- Nationalization of enterprises, banks, and railroads.
- Liberation of oppressed people: Catalonia, Vizcaya, Galicia, and Morocco.
- Suppression of the Civil Guard and Assault Guard.
- Arming of the people.
- Suppression of the regular army and liquidation of officers; democratic election of commanders by soldiers.
- Fraternal alliance with the Soviet Union.

(Payne, 87-88)

Through their press, Codovilla and Díaz made it clear that cooperation with the Republicans would only go so far as to ensure the implementation of the Popular Front’s program (the reversal of all the conservative government’s policies). Once the Popular Front’s program was completed, the Communists would then move towards rapid execution of their plan to eliminate the right and overthrow the Republican government. The Communists attempted to reach out and form an alliance with the Socialists to complete these goals, but neither the more moderate Socialists lead by Indalecio Prieto, nor the Bolshevized sector led by Largo Caballero accepted the Communists’ offer of cooperation. As a result, although the Communists were pleased to see that a large sector of the Socialists was increasingly revolutionary, they were nonetheless wary of the Socialists’ decision to maintain party separation.

Conditions in Spain seemed to be proceeding according to the PCE's plan; Azaña's government was continuing to implement the Popular Front government, and the PCE saw that the time to overthrow the Republican government was rapidly approaching. In fact, on March 4, 1936, Codovilla sent a letter to the Comintern officials indicating that the Azaña government had even moved beyond the Popular Front program and that soon revolutionary conditions would be at their peak (Payne, 93). As the PCE prepared for the revolution, the Soviet leaders were becoming increasingly concerned about Hitler's violation of the Treaty of Versailles by reoccupation of the Rhineland. Feeling the need for collective security more so now than ever before, Soviet leaders warned the PCE against any actions that would potentially upset the Azaña government. The Soviet leaders worried that if the Spanish situation continued to progress, then any hopes of forming an alliance with Britain and France would be lost. In a complete policy reversal that shocked the PCE leadership, the Comintern stated that effective immediately, the Party's goal should be only to create a government that would prevent fascism and the counterrevolution from coming to power. The Comintern wrote:

Do not allow yourselves to be provoked and do not precipitate events that at the present time might be harmful for the revolution and only assist in the triumph of the counterrevolution...In all the party's activity it must be kept in mind that in the present situation the creation of soviet power is not the order of the day, but that, for the time being, the aim is only to create the kind of democratic regime that shuts the door to fascism and to counterrevolution... (Payne, 94)

A successful defense of that goal would strengthen the position of the proletariat and its allies (Elorza, 283). The Soviet Union knew that Britain and France were concerned over the rise of communism throughout Europe. Any sort of Communist-led tumult in Spain would greatly damage the Soviet Union's hopes of aligning itself with Britain and France against Hitler.

As a result, the PCE's rhetoric and tactics changed almost overnight. By mid-April, the PCE leadership was calling for the Spanish people to support the Popular Front government and denounced labor strikes throughout the country. Virtually all of the PCE's February plan was scrapped; the PCE said that the length of the workweek was acceptable and supported the structure of Spain as a series of semi-autonomous provinces under one national government as opposed to a free union of autonomous republics. The PCE, on the surface, at least, went from one of the government's main enemies to one of its strongest supporters within just months.

With the sudden moderation in PCE politics, the POUM remained the only group that unwaveringly sought the realization of the socialist revolution. The POUM proclaimed themselves to be the only true communist party in Spain and called for Azaña to give his power to a more radical government that would help prepare for the proletarian dictatorship. The POUM's line, which was in direct contradiction with that of the PCE, led to a great amount of conflict between the two groups. The PCE began a campaign to destroy the POUM and all traces of Trotskyism within Spain, labeling them as fascist agents and persuading the more-radical Socialists to align against them. Despite Nin's relationship with Trotsky and the officially Trotskyist position of the former ICE, the POUM itself was not a Trotskyist group. In fact, as noted earlier, Trotsky considered the POUM to be traitors to the cause of the socialist revolution due to Nin and Maurín's refusal to adhere to Trotsky's policy of entryism (Payne, 99). Nonetheless, that did not dissuade the PCE in the least from equating the POUM to Trotsky and to fascism. Because of the general public's fear of fascism, the PCE would exploit this throughout the war in order to help turn public opinion away from the POUM. Later on, the

Communists would also employ this tactic as a means to have the POUM leadership removed from any and all governmental positions.

The situation in Spain in 1936 deteriorated rapidly. The Communists pressed the government to outlaw and disband any right-wing political groups and arrest the leadership of such parties, while still calling on the populace to support the Popular Front. Meanwhile, the constant infighting between the leftist parties and their varying stances on the Spanish Republic led to constant strikes and a general decline of public order. The government did little to try to contain the growing chaos. In fact, the government continued to cater to the far-left parties and their demands. On July 15, 1936 government police were sent to arrest José Calvo Sotelo, a monarchist leader, and a Socialist party member who accompanied the police shot and killed Sotelo. Sotelo's assassination was a reprisal for the July 12 killing of the Socialist Assault Guard Lieutenant José Castillo Sería. The assassination of Sotelo was the final nail in the coffin for the Spanish Republic. On July 18, the military announced an insurrection and the Spanish Civil War had begun.

IV. OUTBREAK OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR AND INTERVENTION OF FOREIGN POWERS

The Spanish Civil War began at 5 AM on July 18, 1936 with the revolt of the Army of Africa in Morocco. Once Morocco was secured, the military coup was to continue throughout the rest of mainland Spain. Though it had heard rumors of the insurrection, the Republican government was slow to react. Prime Minister Casares Quiroga believed that the majority of the generals would remain loyal to the Republic.

Consequently, he ordered municipal governments throughout the country not to provide arms to the UGT, CNT, and other syndicates. The government's denial allowed the coup to proceed through much of Spain virtually uncontested. Though the military was not successful in its goal to take all of Spain within 48 hours, during that time frame the division of Spain into Nationalist and Republican zones became clear (Beevor, 55).

Casares Quiroga resigned his post as Prime Minister on the morning of July 19. The subsequent government formed by Azaña lasted just a few hours; its Prime Minister, Diego Martínez Barrio, attempted to negotiate with the military. The offer of peace was rejected and the workers were furious with what they perceived as the government's attempts at treachery (Beevor, 62). A third government, headed by José Giral, finally came to terms with the fact that the military had revolted and that the country was at war.

By July 22, the war was not going as planned for the Nationalists and reinforcements were needed from Morocco. Unexpectedly, the Spanish Navy had chosen to remain loyal to the Republic and so aircraft were needed to transport the troops to the mainland. General Francisco Franco sent a message to Germany notifying them of "the new nationalist Spanish government" and requesting the use of "ten troop-transport planes with maximum seating capacity through private German firms" (Beevor, 64). This was not the only foreign aid that the Nationalists received throughout the course of the war. "Hitler and Mussolini were to provide military, naval, air, logistical and technical support, while American and British business interests supplied vital credits and oil" (Beevor, 79).

The Republic, in contrast, was not so fortunate. Journalists came from all over Europe to report on the Spanish war; the atrocities committed by each side were splashed

on headlines across the globe. The stories written by the journalists severely harmed the Republic's hope for foreign aid and intervention.

The violent excesses recounted in many papers justified that distaste for the revolution in the republican zone which ran strongly in British conservative and diplomatic circles. The left-wing administration in France under Léon Blum suppressed its natural sympathies and, alarmed by Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland that spring, felt obliged to follow the British idea of refusing aid to both sides (a policy which was bound to favour the nationalists). (Beevor, 81)

Once it became clear that the Spanish conflict would evolve into a long, drawn-out war, the Republic began to look for help from abroad for arms and supplies. Seeking aid from the United States government was not an option due to the U.S. Neutrality Act of 1935 (this official government stance, however, did not prevent private businesses from providing trucks, credit, and oil to the nationalists). France was initially inclined to help, but was warned by Britain that such action would only further encourage Hitler to increase his aid to the nationalists. As a result, France proposed a policy of non-intervention to Britain, the USSR, Germany, and Italy on August 2, 1936. While the pact was "agreed to" by all parties, it did not deter Germany and Italy from continuing to provide military and financial aid to Franco. In fact, as Magro and Gil describe, the pact was not even truly a pact at all. "En realidad nunca hubo un Acuerdo de No Intervención como tal, sino simples declaraciones, hasta 27, de los distintos gobiernos europeos, que jamás culminaron en un tratado único, con lo cual tampoco las violaciones de estas declaraciones fueron una violación del Derecho internacional" (134). Britain and France chose to turn a blind eye to the blatant German and Italian violations of the non-intervention pact and cut off any and all commerce with the Republican government (Beevor, 137).

Britain and France's rationale for not aiding the Republic was fairly simple: they felt that doing so would be seen as a provocation by Hitler. Still recovering from the scars of the First World War, Britain sought to avoid another conflict at all costs and persuaded Leon Blum's government to act against their sympathies and refrain from aiding the Republic. Ironically, the more traditional segments of the German government were wary of becoming involved with the Nationalists for fear of provoking Great Britain. Hitler chose to ignore the dissidents and pursued his own policy with regards to Spain. As Beevor explains, both Germany and Italy chose to aid Franco's troops for strategic reasons. In the first place, the Spanish conflict provided a distraction for the rest of Europe from Hitler's military buildup within Germany. Secondly, a Fascist Spain would serve as a proximate threat to France and as a threat to Britain's control over the Suez Canal. Mussolini, too, was eager to see the establishment of another Mediterranean Fascist power. With a Fascist Spain as an indebted ally, Italy would have naval control over the entire Mediterranean Sea (Beevor, 137).

As a result of the PCE's increasing importance within both the government and the populace of Spain, the USSR had been involved in the country's affairs since before the outbreak of the Civil War. Consequently, the USSR was the only true foreign power to which the Republic could turn. The Soviet Union was hesitant to respond to Giral's request due to Hitler's involvement with the nationalists. Stalin feared that violating the non-intervention pact would harm the USSR's diplomacy with Britain and France at a time when their friendship was most needed. Nonetheless, he also knew that refusing to aid the Republic would severely harm Soviet credibility amongst European Communist groups, and in the end, reputation won out. As Maurice Thorez, in charge of supplying

the Comintern with information regarding the French Popular Front suggested, "...la intervención fascista anulaba los supuestos de la pasividad impuesta al mundo comunista (léase URSS) por la no intervención" (Elorza, 318). As a result, the USSR passed a nine-point resolution in mid-September to officially aid the Spanish Republic. The seventh and eighth points described the method in which the Soviet Union would help the Republic.

7. Proceder al reclutamiento entre los obreros de todos los países, de voluntarios con experiencia militar, con el fin de su envío a España.
8. Organizar la ayuda técnica al pueblo español mediante el envío de obreros y de técnicos cualificados. (Elorza, 322)

These provisions led to the formation of the famous International Brigades, groups of volunteer militiamen from all over the world who came to fight on behalf of the Spanish Republic. As a result, by late September the Soviet Union began organizing military aid and supplies to help the Spanish Republic.

V. COMMUNIST PARTY INVOLVEMENT IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Both the Soviet Union and the PCE were very involved with the left throughout the course of the Civil War. Analysis of the PCE's actions and policies will attempt to show that their involvement in the war damaged the Republic more than it helped. By virtue of the PCE's policies, they divided both the government and the militias. The PCE's divisive actions greatly hindered the Spanish Republic in its fight against Franco and the Nationalists.

One of the PCE's biggest projects throughout the course of the war was the creation of a Popular Army (also referred to as the People's Army), comprised of all the leftist militia groups. The Communists suggested that the consolidation and official

training and organization of all the militia groups under a unified leadership would provide the only means to victory against the Nationalists.

A mass of armed people which does not have severe discipline, which has not been instructed or prepared militarily, which is not acquainted with the fundamentals of an attack against the enemy, in time decomposes, becomes demoralized, loses its combativeness and continues to represent a danger to the rearguard... (Jesús Hernández, qtd. in Cattell, 87)

The PCE also fought for the creation of a single, unified proletarian party, or a United Front to stand up to the Nationalists' threat. Nonetheless, in some ways, the People's Army and the United Front mirrors the Communists' actions within the Popular Front government coalition. Though they preached the importance of unity amongst all Republicans, it was really a method for the Communists to gain further control of the situation and implement their programs and policies. Due to both their disciplined military training and their bargaining position with the Republic, Communists were placed into all the leadership roles of the People's Army. In other words, the Communists essentially had sole control over the Popular Army. The Communist monopoly on the leadership positions outraged many of the militia groups, especially the CNT. It is true that many Soviets had much more extensive military training than members of the CNT or the other militia groups, but they were not necessarily more familiar with Spain itself. By preventing any leadership positions to be held by members of the other militias, the Communists alienated those groups and essentially undermined their own proclaimed goal of Republican unity. Many syndicate members refused to fully submit to the Communist discipline and as a consequence, the unity that the Communists sought was never fully achieved. Though the Communists claimed that unity and cooperation among all leftist groups was necessary, as they did in the elections of 1936, they also made it clear that they were in control and that the United Front would be run in their fashion or

not at all. Other actions taken by the Communists throughout the war further demonstrate the idea that their call for unification was nothing more than a simple ruse.

Perhaps the greatest source of disagreement between the various groups aligned in defense of the Spanish Republic was the idea of revolution. Some groups saw the Spanish situation as an indicator for the need of an immediate workers' revolution, while other groups desired to postpone or prevent any sort of uprising from occurring. The PCE leadership was one of the most outspoken antirevolutionary groups of the Spanish left. According to the Communists, triggering a socialist revolution during a period of such instability would all but guarantee a victory for the Nationalists. The PCE leadership stressed that a proletariat revolution could only be successful once victory was in the hands of the Republic. At that time, the Spanish situation would be reassessed and only then would consideration be given to the execution of the workers' revolt. One of the popular Communist slogans of the period, "The war first and the revolution afterwards" (Orwell, 67), is a clear demonstration of the PCE's policy. Of course, the Communists were also trying to protect the interests of the Soviet Union, as a Communist Revolution in Spain would harm Soviet relations with France and Britain. Conservatives in Britain and in France were concerned about the proliferation of communism throughout Europe, and a Communist-led revolution in Spain would likely damage Stalin's policy of collective security against Hitler.

In contrast, the POUM and some rank-and-file communists were among the most vehement opponents of postponing the workers' revolution. They saw capitalism and fascism as equals, and believed that defending the Spanish Republic not only ran contrary

to the philosophies of Marxism, but that it was also a death sentence for the anarchist or socialist revolution.

Spanish communists were strongly influenced by their own images of the Russian revolution, which they saw as a mixture of romantic heroism and a ruthless rejection of sentimentality to achieve what they thought would be a better society. [...] Anyone who wavered or questioned this was a weak petit bourgeois, if not a traitor to the international proletariat. (Beevor, 47)

The question of the revolution became a point that truly undermined any semblance of unity amongst the Spanish left. The only other group that sought the implementation of an immediate revolution was the CNT, and consequently the anarchists found themselves sympathizing with the plight of the POUM. Furthermore, although the PSOE had been cooperating with the PCE since the conception of the Popular Front government, some Socialists, including Largo Caballero, the Spanish Prime Minister, refused to completely give up on the idea of a Spanish revolution. He agreed that it was necessary for a centralized government to unify the various Republican groups, but he would not completely reverse the far left's revolutionary program that had been implemented at the start of the war (Cattell, 132). Though the Communists initially supported Caballero, this would soon change once they realized that he would not bow to their every whim and that he would not give up on the revolution. Many of the problems that further divided the leftist groups throughout the course of the war hinged upon that central issue of the revolution. As Beevor describes, that single issue created a civil war within the civil war (262). Throughout much of 1937, the PCE would focus its energy on eliminating the dissidents among the left, completely destroying any remaining sense of unity that the Republican groups once had. It was this rabid infighting, this civil war within the civil war, which grabbed the attention of the entire left, effectively allowing Franco much more freedom to advance through Republican territory. Referring to this rampant disunity

as its own civil war is no exaggeration: the leftist groups attacked and persecuted each other both in word and in deed. Yet, in many instances, it is clear that the PCE was the primary instigator of the violence and quarrels.

On September 29, 1936, the Soviet Union officially approved a plan for military intervention in the Civil War. As previously mentioned, the Soviet Union was the only power that came to the defense of the Republic. The Soviets were able to provide weaponry, ammunition, and trained soldiers and officers to the Republic, which was sorely lacking both in arms and in trained military personnel. It is without question that the Republic was in dire need of the Soviet military aid in order to stand up against the well-trained and disciplined Spanish Army. Of course, the assistance was not simply a gift from the Soviets. Rather, it came at the price of greater Communist involvement within the Spanish government and within the People's Army.

La decisión soviética de intervenir militarmente en la guerra española demostró ser de crucial importancia, ya que permitió a la "Tercera" República revolucionaria, o la República en tiempo de guerra, sobrevivir al asalto de Franco a Madrid, y continuar la Guerra Civil durante algún tiempo más. Hubo que pagar un precio, y ése fue el inevitable crecimiento de la influencia soviética. (Payne, qtd. in Zavala, 16)

Payne notes that one of the Soviet Union's main approaches to the Spanish Civil War after September 1936 was "major internal participation and manipulation through the Comintern and the PCE" (146). This participation came both within the government and within the military. The Communists were able to gain such influence because they knew that the life of the Republic depended on their aid. Because the Soviet Union could threaten to withdraw its aid at any time, the PCE found itself in a position where its demands were paid greater attention. And, as will be shown, many of those demands benefited only the PCE. They used their increased influence to purge the dissident left from the Republican ranks and to overthrow the government of Largo Caballero. The

Communists became the dominant group among all the leftist parties and they made sure that their control was evident to everyone else.

The Communists were able to infiltrate the Republican government in a variety of ways. Firstly, they used propaganda and censorship to support the sympathies that many Spanish workers already held for the Russian Revolution (Cattell, 101). They also used propaganda to demean their opponents, most notably the POUM. The use of propaganda allowed for Communists, a group whose numbers had never been overwhelmingly large, to gain influence among the general Spanish populace. Within the government itself, Soviets and Spanish Communists served as “advisers” for many of the government personnel and often seemed to have nearly complete control over the operations of the People’s Army. Indalecio Prieto, serving as Minister of the Navy in 1936, complained of several instances in which the Communists altered and interfered with orders that were sent out from the government. As previously mentioned, most of the People’s Army leadership positions were held by Soviets or Spanish Communists, as well. The Communists also gained a great deal of influence over the government cabinet. Though they made an effort to maintain the façade of a Popular Front government by only having two of their party members in official cabinet positions (so as not to alarm Britain and France), the Communists found other ways to increase their sway over the cabinet ministers. One such method was by ensuring that members of other parties who were actually Communist followers or supporters were placed into the other cabinet posts. For example, Alvarez del Vayo, a Socialist, was supported by the PCE for the posts of Foreign Minister and General Commissar of the Army.

In a set of schemes that run completely contrary to the idea of Republican unification, the Communists made use of personal vendettas and jealousies as a method to increase their influence. Jesús Hernández describes the Communists' mind games with the Socialists as such:

From their suicidal antagonisms we were able to benefit in advancing our cause. Today we supported this one in his fight against that one, tomorrow we would reverse the roles and support the latter, while today, tomorrow and always we pushed some against others to their mutual destruction, a game that we practiced openly with considerable success. (qtd. in Payne, 203)

By taking advantage of the personal differences between Indalecio Prieto and Largo Caballero, the Communists were more or less able to gain control over the Socialist party. Knowing that the *prietistas* were not as set on revolution as Caballero was, the Communists worked to undermine Caballero's support within the UGT and the PSOE. The more moderate Socialists approved of attacks against the Anarchists due to the Anarchists' unwillingness to support the Republican government. Caballero refused to support or allow any sort of violence against the Anarchists, however, creating a tense situation within the PSOE and causing him to fall out of his party's favor. Nonetheless, the Communists did not yet have a decisive event that would allow them to push Caballero out of power. They would have to wait until May 1937 (discussed further below) for such an opportunity to present itself. The Communists were also able to use the Socialists' and Republicans' disdain for the Anarchists to reduce the anarchists' power within the government (Cattell, 111). The Socialists and Republicans had disliked and feared the Anarchists for quite some time. They worried that the Anarchists' large following would provide the CNT with the power and the means to instigate an Anarchist revolution following the conclusion of the Civil War. Communist propaganda and the Socialist press painted the Anarchists as "uncontrollables" (Cattell, 135) and further fed

the anxieties of the more moderate leftist groups. The CNT's sympathy for the POUM and their revolutionary stance only added fuel to the Communists' fervent desire to have any traces of Anarchism removed from the cabinet. It would also take the events of May and the fall of Largo Caballero for the Communists to get their way, but eventually the government cabinet would have no Anarchists among its seats. As the Communists continued to employ various methods to discredit their opposition, they were also able to increase their power within the so-called Popular Front government and were able to move forward with their agendas as they pleased.

One of the PCE's most ardent desires since even before the war began had been the complete elimination of the POUM. Throughout the first part of the Spanish Civil War, the POUM had become the PCE's scapegoat for all problems that had occurred during the administration of the Second Republic. "Trotskyism was anathema to the Communists in the 'thirties, and even though the POUM was not a Trotskyite party the Communists considered it as such and seized upon it for their revenge in Spain" (Cattell, 118).⁵ Though they remained friendly to the Soviet exile, both the POUM leaders and Trotsky himself proclaimed that the POUM was not a Trotskyist party. Nonetheless, this did not discourage the Soviet Union and the PCE from attacking them as such. Despite Trotsky's denunciation of the POUM, in appearance, at least, they became increasingly tied with Trotsky after Maurín was arrested in the Nationalist zone at the beginning of the

⁵ Trotskyism had become a thorn in the side of Stalinist Communists due to the difference in opinion of these two leaders regarding the way in which Communist revolutions should be carried out. Trotsky championed the idea of a permanent revolution, which would take place throughout the world. He also believed that the Soviet Union should be very hands-on and involved in the fostering of these revolutions. Stalin, on the other hand, was content to focus the majority his efforts on Russia. According to Trotsky, "Stalin's mere 'sympathy' for the work of fomenting the 'World Revolution of the World Proletariat' is not enough...He accuses the Dictator of resting content, with the 'partial revolution' (i.e. the Sovietization of Russia). Comrade Trotsky, grand-old, fire-eating, impotent revolutionist, demands "The Permanent Revolution!" (*TIME*, Monday, July 14, 1930).

war. Following his arrest, the leadership of the POUM fell directly onto the shoulders of Andreu Nin, whose previously close friendship with Trotsky all but doomed the party.

Andreu Nin...fue un hombre de gran inteligencia y capacidad, pero políticamente menos astuto, imaginativo y flexible. Desde el principio, los líderes del POUM habían hecho hincapié en que el suyo era el verdadero partido comunista español, en el sentido de formar un partido español genuino, no controlado desde Moscú, y en eso, por supuesto, tenían razón. Pero sin Maurín, atrapado desde el principio en la zona nacional, la dirección del POUM recayó en Andreu Nin, quien lideró el partido a través de una política extremista de revolución a ultranza, una política que no era la más práctica en medio de una guerra civil desesperada. Incluso la CNT demostró ser más flexible que el POUM. (Payne, qtd. in Zavala, 16)

Nin's inability to adapt the policies of his party to the political environment in Spain and his strict adherence to the idea of revolution mirrored Trotsky's philosophies of a permanent, world-wide revolution. This allowed the PCE to further their portrayals of the party as a Trotskyist organization (and as previously mentioned, as an underground fascist organization).

The propaganda against the POUM became increasingly negative and critical and the Partido Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (Socialist Unification Party of Catalonia, PSUC) quickly became the POUM's most outspoken enemy. The PSUC had been formed on July 25, 1936 from the fusion of several Catalanian Marxist groups. Though it employed the use of the word "Socialist" party within its title, the PSUC was effectively the PCE's Catalanian equivalent. "It is necessary to explain that when one speaks of the P.S.U.C. 'line' one really means the Communist Party 'line'" (Orwell, 58). The POUM was a group of very few members and hardly any influence outside of Catalonia, but it became the target of much persecution from the PSUC. As George Orwell explained in his memoir of the Spanish Civil War:

The POUM was declared to be no more than a gang of disguised Fascists, in the pay of Franco and Hitler, who were pressing a pseudo-revolutionary policy as a way of aiding the Fascist cause. The P.O.U.M. was a 'Trotskyist' organization and 'Franco's Fifth Column'. [...] And this story was spread all over Spain by means of posters, etc., and

repeated over and over in the Communist and pro-Communist press of the whole world.
(Orwell, 64)

Communist agents claimed to have recovered evidence that proved cooperation between the POUM and the Falange (the true Spanish Fascist party) and blamed the POUM for all the violent disturbances that had occurred in Barcelona over the previous several months (Beevor, 269). Though the “evidence” was untrue, both the CNT and the POUM’s newspapers were censored in the spring of 1937 and the beleaguered parties were unable to respond to the inflammatory accusations. These accusations began to turn the focus of the Republican groups away from their true enemy, Francisco Franco and the Nationalist Army. By persecuting “their own” ranks, it is as though the Communists and their allies were unwitting accomplices to the Spanish Army. Instead of directing their energy towards Franco, they were directing it amongst themselves. What would soon follow was a complete self-destruction and implosion of the Spanish Republic’s defenders.

Throughout March and April of 1937, concentrated attempts were made by the Communists and the Socialists to have the Anarchists and the POUM removed from the national and provincial governments throughout Spain.

The next step taken by the government and the Communists, leading to the complete incorporation of Catalonia into the program of all Spain, proved to be too much for the *POUM* and the more virulent elements among the Anarchists to accept. Since the previous October they had watched their revolutionary accomplishments and control give way...The capitulation had reached its peak in April and May, 1937, and these groups felt that to give way another step would sacrifice the revolution for good. Even after a victory over Franco, they would have been too weak to reassert their control. (Payne, 142)

The Communists had been withholding aid from Catalonia due to the POUM’s participation within the Generalitat. It appears that the Communists set two conditions for the distribution of aid to Catalonia: that the POUM no longer be permitted to participate in the Generalitat and that the Catalanian government should follow the program planned

by the central government (Cattell, 109). In an effort to salvage any modicum of their power and influence, the revolutionary elements of the left began to fight back against the Communists and Socialists.

The Communists found other methods of frustrating the Anarchists. The CNT accused the Communists of denying them arms, ammunition, and other supplies. While it is true that the Republic did not possess an abundance of these necessities, George Orwell's account seems to validate the CNT's complaint that only militia units that were strictly under the PCE's control were provided with supplies (Radosh, Habeck, and Sevastionav, 122). Orwell explains that the Communists deliberately withheld arms and supplies from the Anarchists for fear that the Anarchists would use the arms for a revolutionary end (68). The Soviets managed to control the distribution of supplies by having their own party members placed into key positions within the government. For example, Lieutenant-Colonel Antonio Cerdón, the head of the technical secretariat of the ministry of war, controlled pay, supplies, and personnel (Beevor, 257). Considering the large numbers of syndicate members enlisted in the CNT, withholding arms from the Anarchists greatly reduced the number of men who could fight for the Republic.

May of 1937 was a month that most clearly demonstrates how the Communist policies helped lead the Republic towards destruction. David Cattell calls it the "culmination of the Communist purge of the revolutionary Left" (141). The PCE set out to ensure that all of its leftist opponents were either silenced or outlawed. The threat of the termination of Soviet aid helped the PCE in their quest to overtake their rivals. When the revolutionary elements of the Spanish left realized that their existence was in danger, they began to fight back by assassinating Communist party members. In turn, the

Communists stepped up their attacks. May was a month of very violent infighting amongst the leftist groups in Barcelona, and the CNT/FAI and POUM were blamed by the PCE and PSUC for causing the problems.

The most famous of the May Week incidents was the battle over control of the Telefónica (Telephone Exchange) building in Barcelona. The CNT had taken control of the building at the very beginning of the war, and the Generalitat had been unable to recover it, giving the CNT control over phone communications throughout Catalonia. On May 3, the PSUC sent police to the Telefónica building to organize a voluntary hand-over of the Telefónica building. The CNT refused the offer. “This was the spark igniting an outbreak of hostilities all over Barcelona, a city long used to rioting and open warfare. Each group brought out its hidden stores of arms, including machine guns and tanks, and set up barricades and gun emplacements to protect its particular section of the city” (Cattell, 142). By the evening of May 3, almost all of Barcelona was parceled into pieces controlled by the various workers’ groups.

What the devil was happening, who was fighting whom, and who was winning, was at first very difficult to discover. The people of Barcelona are so used to street-fighting and so familiar with the local geography that they know by a kind of instinct which political party will hold which streets and which buildings...I could grasp that the Ramblas, which is one of the principal streets of the town, formed a dividing line. To the right of the Ramblas the working-class quarters were solidly Anarchist; to the left a confused fight was going on among the tortuous by-streets, but on that side the P.S.U.C. and the Civil Guards⁶ were more or less in control. Up at our end of the Ramblas, round the Plaza de Cataluña, the position was so complicated that it would have been quite unintelligible if every building had not flown a party flag. The principal landmark here was the Hotel Colón, the headquarters of the P.S.U.C., dominating the Plaza de Cataluña. In a window near the last O but one in the huge ‘Hotel Colón’ that sprawled across its face they had a machine-gun that could sweep the square with deadly effect. A hundred yards to the right of us, down the Ramblas, the J.S.U., the youth league of the P.S.U.C., were holding a big department store whose sand-bagged side-windows fronted our observatory. They had hauled down their red flag and hoisted the Catalan national flag. On the Telephone Exchange, the starting-point of all the trouble, the Catalan national flag and the Anarchist flag were flying side by side. Some kind of temporary compromise had been arrived at

⁶ It is known that Orwell erred in claiming that the “Civil Guards” were in control in the city because the Civil Guard was one of Franco’s military forces. Rather, the Assault Guards, who remained loyal to the Republic, are the group that he is describing.

there, the exchange was working uninterruptedly and there was no firing from the building. (Orwell, 131-2)

Cattell adds that the only area controlled by the Generalitat was the land directly surrounding their governmental offices (142). George Orwell describes the situation of the following morning, May 4, from his post guarding the POUM's barricade on the roof of the POUM Executive Building. Across the street, a group of Civil Guards were holding the Café Moka.

One of the Civil Guards opposite knelt down and began firing across the barricade. I was on guard in the observatory at the time. I trained my rifle on him and shouted across:

"Hi! Don't you shoot at us!"

"What?"

"Don't you fire at us or we'll fire back!"

"No, no! I wasn't firing at you. Look – down there!"

He motioned with his rifle towards the side-street that ran past the bottom of our building. Sure enough, a youth in blue overalls, with a rifle in his hand, was dodging round the corner. Evidently he had just taken a shot at the Civil Guards on the roof.

"I was firing at him. He fired first." (I believe this was true.) "We don't want to shoot you. We're only workers, the same as you are."

He made the anti-Fascist salute, which I returned. I shouted across: "Have you got any more beer left?"

"No, it's all gone." (Orwell, 133)

Much of Barcelona was not as friendly, however, and Orwell describes the constant sound of shots being fired from other areas of the city. The UGT and CNT leadership tried to forge a cease-fire and truce, and the city was back to some semblance of normality by May 9.

Although the weapons had been put down, the rifts between the leftist groups in Barcelona grew even deeper after accusations over responsibility for the week-long uprising began to fly. The Communists called the uprising a Fascist-provoked plot led by the POUM to end the Communist party's domination in Catalonia. In his memoirs, PSUC Military Secretary Joaquin Almendros agrees, writing, "Pero también es cierto que fue el Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista el que ayudó a crear el clima propicio e insensato que condujo a los sucesos de mayo" (65). The CNT retorted that the whole situation had

been a plot contrived by the government, Communists, and the PSUC to eliminate the anarchist leadership from the Generalitat. Party accusations aside, the truth is that it was nothing more than an attempt by the PSUC (as mentioned, they were essentially the Communists of Catalonia) to wrest power within the province away from the Anarchists. The Republican government did little to dispel the idea of the Communists' provocation of the uprising. "Caballero, leader of the left Socialists, sanctioned, if by nothing other than his silence, the actions carried out by his government against the Anarchists and urged by the Communist party" (Cattell, 147). As the most powerful syndicate in Catalonia, the CNT began to provide protection to POUM members, who were small in number and formed just about the only other revolutionary segment of the Spanish left. Consequently, rather than focusing on the fight between the Republicans and the Nationalists, Barcelona's attention turned to the fight between the CNT/POUM and the remaining leftist groups. By mid-1937, the Nationalists had taken approximately 2/3 of the country, with only Madrid, Valencia, and Catalonia remaining in the hands of the Republic. Needless to say, the events of May occurred at a time when the Republic could least afford to be distracted from focusing on its main enemy, Francisco Franco, and the Nationalist army.

The POUM situation and the May Week events were two of the factors that led to the downfall of Largo Caballero. He had refused to outlaw the POUM's existence despite pressure from the Communist party and several of his cabinet ministers. In fact, though Largo Caballero was unaware, several of his ministers had defected to the Communist Party (Bolloten, 114). Aggressive Communist propaganda painted him as the only remaining obstacle blocking the victory of the Republic and on April 14, the Comintern

sent a dispatch to the PCE to create a governmental crisis that would force Caballero out of his government position (Payne, 212-3). Caballero responded by trying to reduce the Communists' influence in the government by restricting the power of the political commissars. Another point of issue between Caballero and the Communists was Caballero's posts both as Prime Minister and as Minister of War. The Communists claimed that with both posts, Caballero could not dedicate enough time to strategy (Cattell, 155). Of course, it must also be noted that the Ministry of War was a post over which the Communists were desperate to gain control. The climax of the problem came as a result of Caballero's planned offensive in the west to split the Nationalist army into two separate zones in May 1937. The Communists attempted to prevent the offensive by ordering General Miaja, the general in charge of executing the offensive, not to transfer the troops from Madrid. Nonetheless, Miaja gave in once Caballero directly ordered him to comply with the mandate. The Communists then precipitated a cabinet crisis when Hernández and Uribe walked out of government meetings. The Republicans and right Socialists also walked out on meetings over the next several days, putting the government on the verge of collapse. The Communists gave President Azaña and Largo Caballero an ultimatum: unless Largo Caballero resigned his post as Minister of War, the Soviet Union would cut off all arms supplies to Spain. As a result of the threat, Azaña would not allow Largo Caballero to keep the Minister of War position and Largo Caballero was forced to resign from both his posts on May 16, 1937.

The Communists had been calling for Largo Caballero's expulsion from the government for quite some time and had been promoting Juan Negrín as their favored candidate. The following day (May 17), Negrín was named as the next Prime Minister

and he realized just how dire the Republic's situation was. Opinions on the Negrín administration are mixed; some praise him as the leader who best symbolized the spirit of the Spanish Republic while others, such as Burnett Bolloten, vilify him as a great deceiver (Miralles, 25). Regardless of one's personal opinions towards Negrín, the major defect of his governmental administration was the increasing amount of power that it granted to the Communists. Unfortunately for Negrín, he found himself in a catch-22 situation. Without the aid of the Soviet Union, the Nationalists would easily be able to complete their takeover of the country. The Spanish Republic had no weapons and no ammunition with which to continue fighting. Because it had sent all its gold reserves to the Soviet Union, even if the European democracies had not cut off commerce with Spain, the Republic also had no money with which to purchase supplies from other countries. Although previous Republican administrations had created this dependency, Negrín knew that the Republic would live or die by the Communists. Furthermore, recognizing that the Communists could be just as influential in calling for Negrín's removal as they had been in calling for his appointment as Prime Minister, Negrín knew he had to keep the Communists happy. As a result, Negrín chose to acquiesce to the demands and desires of the PCE and the PSUC.

Negrín's government represented a complete change in the direction of the Republic. Since the beginning of the Civil War, there had been a power vacuum amongst the left in Spain, with all of the syndicates jockeying for position. This power struggle was a direct effect of the inability amongst the leftist groups to come to an agreement over the goals of the war. The Communists knew that Negrín's administration would support their goal of postponing the workers' revolution and that it would take power

back from the syndicates and put it in the hands of the political parties. Many felt that the Negrín administration was the true Popular Front government that they had been waiting for since the elections of 1936. Yet, “tal restauración se producía en medio del hundimiento del republicanismo, las divisiones del socialismo y el crecimiento insólito del PCE” (Miralles, 135). Negrín’s government did not attempt to create an equal division of power, as Largo Caballero had tried to maintain. Rather, he concentrated the power of the government in the hands of the Communists and the centrist-socialists, who had opposed the idea of revolution since the beginning. Negrín’s first cabinet consisted of three moderate Socialists (one being Negrín himself, who also served the role of finance minister), Hernández and Uribe, two Republicans, one Basque Nationalist, and one Catalanian Esquerra. The Communists had gotten their first wish: there were no left Socialists, no Anarchists, and no POUMists in Negrín’s cabinet. In other words, the government was comprised of anti-revolutionary leftist groups. The selection of Negrín as Prime Minister was highly praised by officials in London and in Washington. They commended Negrín’s “iron hand” and “law-and-order” stance. Meanwhile, his government turned a blind eye as the secret police persecuted anyone who opposed Stalin and as they annihilated the POUM in order to maintain the arms supplies from the Soviet Union (Beevor, 272).

Now that the Communists had succeeded in ousting the Anarchists from the government, they reached out to the CNT in an attempt to earn their cooperation with the government and its program. They indicated that if the CNT was willing to drop its revolutionary delusions and was willing to work towards the common goal of preventing the victory of fascism, then the Communists would lend them an audience (Cattell, 164).

Of course, the Anarchists were too angered at the recent occurrences in the government that they refused to cooperate. The Communists now faced a dilemma. They had desired to reduce the power of the Socialists and Left Socialists, but they had not meant to completely push away those groups. The cooperation of those parties was absolutely crucial to the success of the war. The PCE quickly realized that the damage they had inflicted on their relations with these groups was too great and found that their desire for unification was rapidly slipping away.

The Soviets had announced in December of 1936 that they would cut off all aid to Catalonia if the POUM was not thrown out of the Generalitat (the Catalanian governmental and administrative body). One of Negrín's first actions as Prime Minister was to outlaw the POUM's newspaper, *La Batalla*. Less than one month later, on June 16, the POUM was declared illegal and POUM leaders were violently arrested throughout Barcelona.

Meanwhile the police were arresting everyone they could lay hands on who was known to have any connection with the P.O.U.M. Within a day or two all or almost all of the forty members of the Executive Committee were in prison. Possibly one or two had escaped into hiding, but the police were adopting the trick of seizing a man's wife as a hostage if he had disappeared. [...] In some cases the police had even gone to the length of dragging wounded militiamen out of the hospitals. (Orwell, 205)

A retroactive decree made a week later deemed these actions legal and also allowed for the formation of espionage and treason tribunals. During the trials, Largo Caballero testified in favor of the POUM and staunchly defended his refusal to outlaw a party that represented Spanish workers (Zavala, 27). Despite an international outcry over the unjust persecutions of the POUM, Negrín did nothing to thwart the outbreak of violence against the party.

Another event that created international outrage was the assassination and cover-up of POUM leader Andreu Nin. Once the POUM was declared illegal, Nin was arrested

by Communist secret police. Interrogators tried to force him to confess to cooperating with the fascists, but he refused. In his last testimony, Nin wrote, “Niego una y mil veces que sea un espía fascista al servicio de Franco, como se me imputa” (qtd. in Zavala, 58). Frustrated by their inability to extract a confession from Nin, the secret police instead used a different method to “prove” his guilt.

...false documents were prepared first to legalize Nin’s removal from the original jail and then to provide evidence that he had been liberated from the basement checka by foreign agents. German-speaking members of the International Brigades were used in the latter operation; they carefully left a wallet with German documentation as well as money from the Nationalist zone. On June 23 Nin was executed... (Payne, 228)

The official Communist line was that Andreu Nin had been rescued by the Falange and was hiding somewhere in the Nationalist zone. Although no one believed the story, the Communists continued to propagate it even after Nin had already been executed. It was not until after the war that official Communist documents ordering the execution were discovered. Though the execution took place during Negrín’s watch, he helped maintain the façade put forth by the Communists. “Preocupado por la imagen de la República en el exterior tras la desaparición de Nin, sostuvo ante la opinión pública la descabellada versión de que el jefe poumista había sido liberado de la cárcel por sus aliados de la Gestapo” (Zavala, 27).⁷

While Caballero had tried, at least to an extent, to keep a lid on the power of the Communists during his period as Prime Minister, Negrín did not follow the same philosophy. Rather, he continued giving the Communists more and more sway as the war continued. The purge of the revolutionary left turned out to be one of the nails in the coffin for the Republic. Despite the fact that the POUM was comprised of only several

⁷ Joaquín Maurín did not share the same unfortunate destiny as his friend. Rather, he was arrested in the Nationalist zone during the beginning of the war, and though he spent many years in prison, he was never executed. (Zavala, 15).

hundred members, the brutal persecution of that group commanded the attention of the entire left. Furthermore, the alienation of the left Socialists and the Anarchists greatly reduced the PCE's allies. Though those groups continued to fight for the Republic until its last days, it was much more difficult to put together any sort of cooperative, organized campaign to face the quickly approaching Nationalist threat. There could no longer be any true People's Army or United Front. The Communists and the centrists were now alone and could not do much more than watch as Franco continued to advance and the Spanish Army occupied more and more of what was previously territory held by the Republic. By this point, it was too late to save the Republic. The internal conflicts that the Communist parties had helped create had allowed Franco to advance deep into Republican territory and had destroyed the morale of the Republican militias. Catalonia was about to fall to the Nationalists and Negrín desperately began a futile attempt to negotiate a peace with Franco.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Soviet Union and the PCE played important roles in the development of the Spanish Civil War, both prior to the start of and during the war itself. The Communists made the same mistakes during the war that they made prior to it. Before the war began, the Communists promoted the idea of a Popular Front to stand against fascism, and they recruited other parties from the left to join in their endeavor. The PCE also made it clear that once the Popular Front was in place, it would pay no consideration to any previous alliances and would push forward with its own programs. This attitude alienated the moderate Republicans and it also showed the PCE's self-importance. Though the PCE

proclaimed the importance of unity, its idea of unity was strict, unquestioning adherence by all to the Communist Party line. The same sort of actions are visible with the People's Army and the United Front concepts that were developed after the outbreak of the war. While they preached an ideal of a unified Army and a single proletarian party that would defend the Republic at all costs, in reality, the policies and actions of the Communists created an atmosphere that had the opposite effect.

As they called for unification, the Communists also sought the elimination of all their opponents on the left, including the POUM and the Anarchists. They also pitted quarreling groups against each other as a method to gain increased control over the government and the left as a whole. The PCE realized this purge through the use of brutality and violence, as well as deception and mind games. Many of the Republican groups, such as the *caballeristas* and *prietistas* were wary of each other's actions even before the war started. Rather than employing methods to attempt to reconcile the differences between these groups, the PCE fed the paranoia and disdain that each group held for the other, effectively deepening the chasms that existed between the various parties. These purges of the dissident Spanish left, combined with the control and influence the Communists held over the Republican government, destroyed any chance that a true unity could exist among the various leftist groups. The policies and actions of the PCE completely undermined their stated goals and hopes for the Spanish Republic and its allies. Diego Abad de Santillán describes the involvement of the Soviet Union and the participation of the Communists as such:

La intervención rusa, que no solucionó ningún problema vital desde el punto de vista del material, escaso, de pésima calidad, arbitrariamente distribuido, dando preferencia irritante a sus secuaces, corrompió a la burocracia republicana, comenzando por los hombres del gobierno, asumió la dirección del ejército, y desmoralizó de tal modo al pueblo que éste perdió poco a poco todo interés en la guerra, en una guerra que se había

iniciado por decisión incontrovertible de la única soberanía legítima: la soberanía popular. (15)

Though the Soviet Union and the PCE sought to portray themselves as defenders and friends of the Spanish Republic, the politics they pursued throughout the Spanish conflict created a “civil war” amongst the left, which ultimately aided the Nationalists to victory in the Civil War.

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